

# Modern Spirits – Eco-Giants Selects Labeltronix’ Lean and Green Labeling



**Quality Eco-Friendly Labels  
that are visually appealing  
and good for the environment**

## ORGANIZATION

Modern Spirits, LLC produces organic, eco-friendly spirits ranging from vodkas and gin to liqueurs and rum. Based in Monrovia, California, the company distributes its artisan spirits nationwide in restaurants, hotels and bars and to some key retailers like BevMo and Bristol Farms. Modern Spirits received independent verification that its environmental initiatives make TRU Vodka and TRU2 Gin the most radically “carbon negative” consumer products in the world. Among other things, one tree is planted for every Modern Spirits bottle sold.

## CHALLENGE

Modern Spirits planned to introduce a new brand—**Fruit Lab Organic Liqueurs**—and wanted to try a new way of labeling. Until now, the company has used only corn-based labels, which initially posed some problems with ink absorption.

“It’s a fine line,” says Melkon Khosrovian, co-founder of Modern Spirits. “We can’t use extremely fragile labels that are the highest levels of eco-friendliness, because they will just disintegrate in shipment or in use. We also don’t want to go to the other extreme. The most beautiful labels that will stay that way forever.”

## SOLUTION

Labeltronix introduced Modern Spirits to its 100% post-consumer waste label selection. Modern Spirits chose the matte version of the label, and then selected Labeltronix’ digital printing to make an impression with its new liqueur labels. It’s a solution that has proven to be both “lean and green.”

## RESULTS

### High Performance from Recycled Label Material

The 100% PCW labels perform as promised. “So far, our customers love these labels,” said Khosrovian. He found the recycled stock:

- Looks great
- Comes in a texture that felt good to the touch
- Takes ink well
- Survives shipping and use.

“These labels are credibly eco-friendly, and functional,” Khosrovian discovered.

### Top Quality Digital Printing for Speed, Flexibility

Labeltronix’ digital technology in printing Modern Spirits’ labels has paid off because it gives the company the following advantages:

- **Quick to market**— Fast turnaround of labels helps get the Fruit Lab products out the door quickly.
- **Flexibility when printing multiple SKUs**— Fruit Lab currently comes in three different flavors and three distinct brand names: Citry, Crism and Theia. Digital printing allows changes to occur quickly and efficiently, even on short runs.
- **Eliminating waste**— Labeltronix’ Lean Labeling solution allows Modern Spirits to print only the labels they need when they need them, so there is no left-over inventory—an ecological advantage.

“We’ve been going down this path for a year and a half. Embracing ‘green’ in all aspects of our business, while costly, has definitely made a marked improvement in our top and bottom line,” Modern Spirits’ Khosrovian said.



**The Modern Spirits Story: Going Green, One Decision at a Time**

It's a marriage made in heaven. Modern Spirits LLC's pairing of organic ingredients for alcoholic beverages coupled with organic packaging had its roots in the engagement of the company's co-founders, Melkon Khosrovian and Litty Mathew.

Toasted everywhere she met Khosrovian's Armenian relatives, Mathew could barely drink the Russian vodka she was served. Her fiancé Khosrovian started infusing the vodka with fruit, herbs and flower petals. His relatives enjoyed his unusual vodka and liqueur concoctions, too. Modern Spirits became the "artisan spirits" outgrowth of the Mathew-Khosrovian marriage. The company's vodka brand, Modern Spirits Artisan, went to market in December 2004 and was followed by the TRU Organic line in April 2008.

"We took what we used to do at home and started to do it on an artisan/industrial scale. At that time, we did what everyone else did—created beautiful packages in heavy bottles with pretty labels laminated in plastic," recalls Khosrovian.

Once they got a footing in the art of creating spirits, the couple began to reflect on their upbringing in Third World countries, where they learned the value of not wasting materials, and where they saw the ravages of practices like pouring DDT on the soil to kill weeds.

"The more we got to know our farmers here – and how much land it takes to make a little bit of liquor – the more we saw the impact of our industry. Some of our farmers were going through organic certification, so we merged paths and commissioned one of our distillers to make an all-organic wheat spirit," Khosrovian says.

Next came the packaging. "We looked at our old packaging choices and we were kind of horrified," he says. So, they:

- **Improved the bottling, to use lightweight strong bottles**
- **Dropped their plastic labels**
- **Created shipping packages with built-ins that convert the boxes into display cases or shelf-toppers.**

The Modern Spirits team wanted to buy carbon credits that would make its production carbon neutral. Planting trees seemed a perfect fit, so they sponsor Sustainable Harvest in Central America and the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation.

Finally, Modern Spirits decided to test how well it's treating the earth. "What is the impact of all the decisions about content, packaging and trees?" they wondered. Two independent firms verified the eco-wisdom of their ways.

Modern Spirits' production techniques—from field to packaging—generates about 1 kilo of carbon dioxide emissions per bottle of TRU, which is one-half or one-quarter that of wine.

Add in trees planted, and Modern Spirits generates a "negative carbon impact." A bottle of TRU vodka is 789 kilos carbon negative, making it "the most radically negative consumer product in the world," Khosrovian explains.

"It's the impact of all the small decisions we make, every day, that add up to this kind of result," he observes.

